

# A VICTOR AT CHUNGKE

BY CHARLES EGBERT CRADDOCK

AT Tennessee Town, on the Tennessee River, there used to be a great chungke-yard. It was laid off in a wide rectangular area nine hundred feet long, level as a floor, and covered with fine white sand. The ancient, curiously shaped chungke-stones, fashioned with much labor from the hardest rock, worn smooth from immemorial use, kept with the strictest care, exempt by law from burial with the effects of the dead, were the property of this Cherokee town, and no more to be removed thence than the council-house, the great rotunda at one side of the "beloved square," built upon a mound in the centre of the village.

Surely no spot could seem more felicitously chosen for the favorite Indian game. The ground rose about the chungke-yard like the walls of an amphitheatre, on every side save the slope toward the "beloved square" and the river, furnishing an ideal position of vantage for spectators were they even more numerous than the hundreds of Cherokees of all ages that had gathered on the steep acclivities to overlook the game—some disposed beneath the spreading trees, others basking in the sun on the bare ledgy spaces, others still, precariously perched on clifty promontories beetling out from the sharp ascent. Above all, Chilhowee Mountain, aflame with the scarlet glow of its autumnal woods, touched the blue sky. The river, of a kindred blue, with a transient steely change under the shadow of a cloud, showed flashes of white foam, for the winds were rushing down from the Great Smoky Mountains, which were revealed for an instant in a clear hard azure against the pearl-tinted horizon—then again only a mirage, an illusion, a dream of stupendous ranges in the shimmering mist.

In the idle, sylvan, tribal life of that date, nearly one hundred and fifty years ago, it might seem that there was scant duty recognized, imposing serious occupation, to debar the population of Tennessee Town from witnessing the long-

drawn game, which was continued sometimes half the day by the same hardy young warriors, indefatigable despite the hot sun and the tense exercise, straining every muscle. A few old women, their minds intent upon the preparation of dinner, a few of the very young children, relishing their own pottering devices as of a finer flavor of sport, a few old men, like other old men elsewhere, with thoughts of the past so vivid that the present could show but a pallid aspect—these were absent, and were not missed. For the most part, however, the little dwellings were vacant. The usual groups of loungers had deserted the public buildings, which consisted of a bark-and-log house of three rooms, or divisions, at each angle of the "beloved square," and in which were transacted the business affairs of the community—one, painted red, was the "war-cabin," whence arms, ammunition, etc., were distributed, the divisions implying distinctions as to rank among the warriors; another, painted white, was devoted to the priestcraft of the "beloved men"—head men of note, conjurers, and prophets; the cabin of the aged councillors faced the setting sun, as an intimation that their wars were ended and their day done; and in the fourth cabin met the "second men," as the traders called the subordinate authorities who conducted municipal affairs, so to speak—the community labor of raising houses, and laying off and planting with maize and pompions the common fields to be tilled by the women, "who fret at the very shadow of a crow," writes an old trader. All these cabins were now still and silent in the sun. The dome-shaped town-house, of a different style of architecture, plastered within and without with red clay, placed high on the artificial mound, and reached by an ascent of stairs which were cut in regular gradations in the earth, lacked its strange religious ceremonies, its secret colloquing council of chiefs with the two princes of the town, its visitors of distinction, ambassadors from other towns or Indian na-

tions, its wreaths of tobacco sent forth from diplomatically smoked pipes, its strategic "talks," its exchange of symbolic belts and strings of wampum and of swans' wings—white, or painted red and black, as peace hovered or war impended—and other paraphernalia of the savage government. Even the trading-house showed a closed door, and the trader himself, his pipe in his mouth, smoked with no latent significance, but merely to garner its nicotian solace, sat with a group of the elder braves and watched the barbaric sport with an interest as keen as if he had been born and bred an Indian instead of in the far-away dales of Devonshire. Nay, he bet on the chances of the game with the reckless nerve of the Cherokee, always the perfect presentment of the gambler, despite the thrift which characterized his transactions at the trading-house, where he was wont to drive a close bargain, and look with the discerning scrupulousness of an expert into the values of the dressing of a deer-skin offered in barter. But the one was pleasure, and the other business. The deer-skins which he was wearing himself were of phenomenal softness and beauty of finish, for the spare, dapper man was arrayed like the Indians, in fringed buck-skin shirt and leggings; but he was experiencing a vague sentiment of contempt for his attire. He had been recently wearing a garb of good camlet-cloth and hose and a bravely cocked hat, for he was just returned from a journey to Charlestown, five hundred miles distant, where he had made a considerable stay, and his muscles and attitude were still adjusted to the pride of preferment and the consciousness of being unwontedly smart. Indeed, his pack-train, laden with powder and fire-arms, beads and cloth, cutlery and paints, for his traffic with the Indians under the license which he held from the British government, had but come in the previous day, and he had still the pulses of civilization beating in his veins.

For this reason, perhaps, as he sat, one elbow on his knee, his chin in his hand, his sharp, commercially keen face softened by a thought not akin to trade, his eyes were darkened as he gazed at one of the contestants with a doubt that had little connection with the odds which he had offered. He was troubled by a vague regret and a speculation

of restless futility, for it concerned a future so unusual that no detail could be predicted from the resources of the present. And yet this sentiment was without the poignancy of personal grief—it was only a vicarious interest that animated him. For himself, despite the flattering, smooth reminiscence of the camlet-cloth yet lingering in the nerves of his finger-tips, the recent relapse into English speech, the interval spent once more among the stir of streets and shops, splendid indeed to an unwonted gaze, the commercial validities, which he so heartily appreciated, of the warehouses, and crowded wharves, and laden merchantmen swinging at anchor in the great harbor, he was satisfied. He was possessed by that extraordinary renunciation of civilization which now and again was manifested by white men thrown among the Cherokee tribe—sometimes, as in his instance, a trader, advanced in years, "his pile made," as we would say nowadays, the world before him where to choose a home; sometimes a deserter from the British or French military forces, according to the faction which the shifting Cherokees affected at the time; more than once a captive, spared for some whim, set at liberty, free to go where he would—all deliberately and of choice cast their lot among the Cherokees; lived and died with the treacherous race. Whether the wild sylvan life had some peculiarly irresistible attraction; whether the world beyond held for them responsibilities and laborious vocations and irksome ties which they would fain evade; whether they fell under the bewitchment of "Herbert's Spring," named from an early commissioner of Indian affairs, after drinking whereof one could not quit the region of the Great Smoky Mountains, but remained in that enchanted country for seven years, fascinated, lapsed in perfect content—it is impossible to say. There is a tradition that when the attraction of the world would begin to reassert its subtle reminiscent forces, these renegades of civilization were wont to repair anew to this fountain to quaff again of the ancient delirium and to revive its potent spell. Abram Varney had no such necessity in his own case; he only doubted the values of his choice as fitted for another.

Apart from this reflection, it was natural that his eyes should follow the con-

testant whom he had backed for a winner to the tune of more silver bangles, and "ear-bobs," and strings of "roanoke," and gunpowder, and red and white paint, than he was minded to lightly lose. He had laid his wagers with a keen calculation of the relative endowments of the players, their dexterity, their experience, their endurance. He was not influenced by any pride of race in the fact that his champion was also a white man, who, indeed, carried a good share of the favor of the spectators.

A strange object was this champion, at once pathetic and splendid. No muscular development could have been finer, no athletic grace more pronounced than his physique displayed. The wild life and training of the woods and the savage wars had brought out all the constitutional endurance and inherited strength of his stanch English father and his hardy Scotch mother. Murdered they both had been in a frontier massacre, and as a boy of ten years of age, his life spared in some freak of the moment, he had been conveyed hither to Tennessee Town, exhorted to forget, adopted into the tribe, brought up with their peculiar kindness in the rearing of children, taught all the sylvan arts, and trained to the stern duties of war by the great chief Clo-go-ittah himself. The youth had had his baptism of fire in the ceaseless wars which the Cherokees waged against the other Indian tribes. He had already won the "warrior's crown" and his "war-name," a title conferred only upon the bravest of the brave. He was now Otasite, the "Man-killer" of Tennessee Town. He was just twenty years of age, and Abram Varney, gazing at him, wondered what the people in Charlestown would think of him could they see him. For a few days, a week, perhaps, the trader would refer all his thoughts to this civilized standard.

Tall, alert as an Indian, supple too, but heavier and more muscular, Otasite was instantly to be distinguished by his build from among the other young men, although, like the Indians, he wore a garb of dressed deer-skin. His face, albeit no stranger to the use of their pigments and unguents, still showed fair and freckled. His hair bore no resemblance to their lank black locks; of an auburn hue and resolutely curling, it defied the tonsure to which it had been for

years subjected, coming out crisp and ringleted close to his head where it was designed to be bald, and on the top, where the "war-lock" was permitted to grow, it floated backward in two long tangled red curls that gave the lie direct to the Indian similitude affected by the two surmounting tips of eagle feathers. He was arrayed in much splendor, according to aboriginal standards; the fringed seams of his hunting shirt and leggings, fashioned of fine white dressed doe-skin, as pliable as "Canton silk crape," were hung with fawns' trotters; his moccasins were white and streaked with parti-colored paint; he had a curious prickly belt of wolves' teeth, which intimated his moral courage as well as sylvan prowess, for the slaying of these beasts was esteemed unlucky, and shooting at them calculated to spoil the aim of a gun; many glancing, glittering strings of "roanoke" swung around his neck.

Nothing could have been finer, athletically considered, than his attitude at this moment of the trader's speculative observation. The heavy chungke-stone, of a wedgelike shape, had been hurled with a tremendous fling along the smooth sandy stretch of the yard; his competitor, Wyejah, a sinewy, powerful young brave, his buck-skin garb steeped in some red dye that gave him the look when at full speed of the first flying leaf of the falling season, his ears split and barbarically distended on wire hoops and hung with silver rings, his moccasins scarlet, and cardinal wings in his black hair, had just sent his heavy lance, twelve feet long, skimming through the air; then Otasite, running swiftly but lightly abreast with him, launched his own long lance with such force and nicety of aim that its point struck the end of Wyejah's spear, still in flight in mid-air, deflecting its direction, and sending it far afield from the chungke-stone which it was designed in falling to touch. This fine cast counted one point in the game, which is of eleven points, and the Indian braves among the spectators howled like civilized young men at a horse-race.

The sport was very keen, the contest being exceedingly close, for Wyejah had long needed only one additional point to make him a winner, and when Otasite had failed to score he had also failed. The swift motion, the graceful agility, the smiling face of Otasite—for it was

a matter of the extremest exaction in the Indian games that however strenuous the exertion and tense the strain upon the nerves and grievous the mischances of the sport, the utmost placidity of manner and temper must be preserved throughout—all appealed freshly to the trader, although it was a long-accustomed sight.

"Many a man in Charlestown—a well-to-do man" (applying the commercial standard of value)—"would be glad to have such a son," he muttered, a trifle dismayed at the perverse incongruities of fate. "He would have sent the boy to school. If there was money enough he would have sent him to England—and none too good for him!"

The shadows of the two players, all foreshortened by the approach of noon-tide, bobbed about in dwarfish caricature along the smooth sandy stretch. The great chungke-pole, an obelisk forty feet high planted on a low mound in the centre of the chungke-yard, and with a target at its summit used for trials of skill in marksmanship, cast a diminished simulacrum on the ground at its base scarcely larger than the chungke-lances. Now and again these heavy projectiles flew through the air, impelled with an incredible force and a skill so accurate that it seemed impossible that both contestants should not excel. There was a moment, however, when Otasite might have made the decisive point to score eleven had not the chungke-stone slipped from the hand of Wyejah as he cast it, falling only a few yards distant. Otasite's lance, flung instantly, shot far beyond that missile, for which, had the stone been properly thrown, he should have aimed. Wyejah, disconcerted and shaken by the mischance, launching his lance at haphazard, almost mechanically, struck by obvious accident the flying lance of his adversary, deflecting its course—the decisive cast, for which he had striven so long in vain, and which was now merely fortuitous.

The crowds of Indian gamblers, with much money and goods at hazard upon the event, some, indeed, having staked the clothes upon their backs, the rifles and powder for their winter hunt that should furnish them with food, were at once in a clamor of discussion as to the fair adjustment of the throw in the score. The backers of Wyejah claimed the ac-

cidental hit as genuine and closing the game. The backers of Otasite protested that it could not be thus held, since Wyejah's defective cast of the chungke-stone debarred their champion from the possibility of first scoring the eleventh point, which chance was his by right, it being his turn to play; they met the argument cavilling at Otasite's lack of aim by the counter-argument that one does not aim at a flying object where it is at the moment, but with an intuitive calculation of distance and speed where it will be when reached by the projectile hurled after it, illustrating cleverly by the example of shooting with bow and arrow at a bird on the wing.

Otasite and Wyejah both preserved an appearance of joyous indifference. With their lances poised high in the right hand they were together running swiftly up the long alley again to the starting-point, Otasite commenting on the evident lack of intention in Wyejah's lucky cast with a loud, jocosely satiric cry, "*Hala! Hala!*" (signifying "You are too many for me!")

"Lord! how the boy does yell!" Abram Varney exclaimed, a smile pervading the wrinkles wrought about his eyes by much pondering on the problems of the Indian trade, feeling incongruously a sort of elation in the fellow's noisy shouts, which echoed blatantly from the rocky banks of the Tennessee River, and with reduced arrogance and in softer tones from the cliffs of towering Chilhowee.

A sympathetic sentiment glowed in the dark eyes of an Indian chief on the slope hard by, no other than the great Clo-go-it-tah. He was fast aging now; the difficulties of diplomacy constantly increasing in view of individual aggressions and encroachments of the Carolina colonists on the east, and the ever-specious wiles and suave allurements of the French on the west, to win the Cherokees from their British alliance; the impossibility in the gentle patriarchal method of the Cherokee government of controlling the wild young men of the nation, who, as Attakulla-Kulla said, "often acted like madmen rather than people of sense" (and it is respectfully submitted that this peculiarity has been observed in other young men elsewhere); the prophetic vision doubtless of the eventual crushing of his people in the collisions of the great international struggle for the possession

of this country, although the Cherokees were still a powerful tribe despite the depopulating shock of the small-pox, in the year 1738, which reduced their number almost one-half—all brought those tokens of time to the face of Clo-go-ittah, and bowed his straight back, and set an unwonted quiver in the nerves of his old hand that had been firm in his heyday, and strong, and crafty, and cruelly bloody. But his face now was all softened with pleasure, and the pride it expressed was almost tender.

"When my brother the Governor of South Carolina," he said, majestically, speaking in the Cherokee tongue but for the English names (he pronounced the title "Goweno"), "offered to take some Cherokee youths to train in his schools and make scholars of them, I thanked him with affection, for his thought was kind. But I told him that if he would send some of his Carolina youths to the Cherokee nation to be trained, we would make *men* of them!"

His blanket, curiously woven of feathers and wild hemp, requiring years of labor in its intricate manufacture, fell away from one gaunt arm as he lifted it to point with a kingly gesture at the young white man as the illustration of his training; every muscle of strength was on parade in the splendid pose of hurling the great chungke-spear through the air, as Otasite thus passed the interval while waiting the decision of the umpire of the game. Then, with a laugh, oddly blent of affection and pride, Clo-go-ittah took his way down the slope and toward the council-house: the council sat there much in these days of 1753, clouded with smoke and perplexity.

Judging by this specimen of the training of his academy, as it were, Clo-go-ittah had the best of his brother the "Goweno" of South Carolina. It was not, however, merely in muscle that the young captive excelled. As Abram Varney thought of certain sterling manly traits of the highest type which this poor waif had developed here in this incongruous environment, one might suppose from the sheer force of heredity, he shook his head silently, and his eyes clouded, the pulses of Charlestown still beating in his veins. For he was wont to leave for months the treasures of his trading-house, not merely a matter of trinkets and beads, but powder, lead, and fire-arms, sufficient for

accommending an expedition for the "war-path," and great store of cloths, cutlery, paints, in the charge of this valiant gamester of chungke, stanch alike against friend and foe, as safely as if its wealth were beneath his own eye. So insecure had become the Cherokee allegiance to the government that it was impossible now under its uncertain protection to retain white men here in his employ as agents and under-traders, or, indeed, those whose interest and profits amounted to an ownership in a share of the stock. The earlier traders in neighboring towns one by one had gone, affecting a base several hundred miles nearer the white settlements. Some had shifted altogether from the nation, and secured a post among the Chickasaws, who were indubitably loyal to the British. While their withdrawal added to Varney's profits—for each trader was allowed to hold at this time a license only for two Indian towns, it being before the date of the issuance of general licenses, and the custom which they had relinquished, the barter with the Cherokees for deer-skins, now came from long distances, drawn as by a magnet to his trading-house at Tennessee Town—it had resulted in his isolation, and for years he had been perhaps the only British subject west of the Great Smoky Mountains. He had no fear of the Cherokees, however—not even should the political sky, always somewhat overcast, become yet more lowering. He had long been accustomed to these Indians, and he felt that he had fast friends among them. His sane mercantile judgment appraised and appreciated the added opportunities of his peculiar position, which he would not lightly throw away, and the development of Otasite's incongruous commercial values not only removed the possibility of loss during his absence, but added to his facilities in enabling him to secure the fidelity of Indians as packmen, hitherto impracticable, but now rendered to Otasite as one of the tribe. He had recognized with satisfaction, mingled with amusement, national traits in the boy, who, despite his Indian training, would not, like them, barter strings of wampum measuring "from elbow to wrist" without regard to the relative length of arm. Yet he had none of the Indian deceit and treachery. He was blunt, sincere, and bold. His alertness in computation gave Varney

genuine pleasure, although they wrangled much as to his method, for he used the Cherokee numeration, and it set the trader's mercantile teeth on edge to hear twenty called "*tahre skoeh*"—two tens.

"And why not?" Otasite would demand, full of faith in his own teaching. "The Chickasaw will say '*pokoole toogalo*'—ten twos"—and he would smile superior. This was his world, and these his standards—the Cherokees and the Chickasaws.

He was not to be easily influenced or turned save by some spontaneous acquiescence of his own mind, and Varney found himself counting "*skoeh chooke kaiere*" (the old one's hundred) before he ever induced Otasite to say instead "one thousand."

The boy even ventured on censorship in his turn. "You say 'Cherokees' and 'Chickasaws' when you speak of the Tsal-lakee and the Chickasaw; why don't you then say the English-es and the French-es?" For the plural designation of these tribes was a colonial invention.

His bull-dog tenacity, his orderly instincts, his providence, so contrary to the methods of the wasteful Indian, his pottering industry, his indomitable energy and perseverance—all were so national that in days gone past Varney used now and again to clap him on the shoulder with a loud careless vaunt, "British to the marrow!"

A fact, doubtless—and all of a sudden it had begun to seem a very serious fact. So very serious, indeed, that the old trader did not notice the crisis in the chungke-yard, the increasing excitement in the crowds of spectators, the clamors presently when the game was declared a draw and the bets off, the stir of the departing groups. It was silence at last that smote upon his senses with the effect of interruption which the continuance of sound had not been able to compass. He drew himself up with a perplexed sigh, and looked drearily over the expanse of the river. Its long glittering reaches were vacant, a rare circumstance, for the Cherokees of that date were almost amphibious in habit, revelling in the many lovely streams of their mountain country; on the banks their towns were situated, and this fact doubtless contributed to the neatness of their habitations and personal cleanliness, to which the travellers of those times bear a surprised tes-

timony. The light upon the water was aslant now from a 'westerning' sun, and glittering on the snowy breasts of a cluster of swans drifting, dreaming perhaps, on the current. The scarlet boughs on the summit of Chilhowee were motionless against the azure zenith. Not even the vaguest tissue of mist now lingered about the majestic domes of the Great Smoky Mountains, painted clearly and accurately in fine and minute detail in soft dense velvet blues against the hard polished mineral blue of the horizon. The atmosphere was so exquisitely luminous and pellucid that it might have seemed a fit medium to dispel uncertainty in other than merely material subjects of contemplation. Nevertheless he did not see his way clearly, and when he came within view of his trading-house he paused as abruptly as if he had found his path blocked by an obstacle.

There, seated on the step of the closed door which boasted the only lock and key in Tennessee Town, or for the matter of that in all the stretch of the Cherokee country west of the Great Smoky Range, was Otasite, the incongruity of his auburn curls and his Indian head-dress seeming a trifle more pronounced than usual, since it had been for a time an unfamiliar sight. He was awaiting the coming of the trader, and was singing meanwhile in a loud and cheerful voice, "Drink with me a cup of wine," a ditty which he had heard in his half-forgotten childhood. The robust full tones gave no token of the draught made upon his endurance by the heavy exercise of the day, but he seemed a bit languid from the heat, and his doe-skin shirt was thrown open at the throat, showing his broad white chest, and in its centre the barbarous blue discolorations of the "warrior's marks." These disfigurements, made by the puncturing of the flesh with gars' teeth and inserting in the wound paint and pitch, indelible testimonials to his deeds of courage and prowess, Otasite valued as he did naught else on earth, and he would have parted with his right hand as readily. The first had been bestowed upon him after he had gone, a mighty gun-man, against the Muscogeese. The others he had won in the course of a long, furious, and stubborn contest of the tribe with the Chickasaws, who were always the bravest of the brave, and now reduced by their own valor in their many

wars from ten thousand fighting-men to a few hundred. He had attained the "warrior's crown" when he had shown their kindred Choctaws, and the senior sub-tribe of both, the Chockomaws, a cruelty as fierce and a craft as keen as their own. And now he was looking at Abram Varney with kindly English eyes and an expression about the brow, heavily freckled, that almost smote the tears from the elder man. The trader knew from long experience what was coming, but suddenly he had begun to regard it differently. Always upon the end of each journey from Charlestown he had been met here within a day or two by Otasite on the same mission. The long years as they passed had wrought only *external changes since, as a slender wistful boy of eleven years, heart-sick, homeless, forlorn, friendless, save for his Indian captors, likely, indeed, to forget all language but theirs, he had first come with his question—always in English, always with a faltering eyelash and a deprecatory lowered voice, "Did you hear anything in Charlestown of any people named 'Queetlee'?"*

This was the distorted version of his father's name that Clo-go-ittah had preserved. As to the child himself, his memory had perhaps been shaken by the events of that terrible night of massacre, which he only realized as a frightful awakening from sleep to smoke, flames, screams, the ear-splitting crack of rifle-shots at close quarters, the shock of a sudden hurt—and then, after an interval of unconsciousness, a transition to a new world of strange habitudes that grew speedily familiar, and of unexpected kindness that became dear to a frank, affectionate heart; or perhaps in the isolations of the backwoods life he had never heard his father addressed by his surname by a stranger; he was called "Jan" by his wife, and her name was "Eelin," and this Otasite knew, and this was all he knew, save that he himself also had been called "Jan."

"They don't want you, my buck, or they would have been after you," the trader used to reply, being harder, perhaps, when he was younger. Besides, he honestly thought the cadaverous brat, all legs, like a growing colt, and skinny arms, was better off here in the free woodland life which he himself considered no hardship, and affected long after necessity

or interest had dictated his environment. The little lad was safe in the care of the powerful chief Clo-go-ittah, who had adopted him, and who was a man of great force and interest, and of a large experience, having, indeed, been of the delegation of Cherokees who had visited King George in London in 1730. Why should the child seek a home among his own people, unwelcome doubtless, to eat the meagre crust of charity, or serve as an overworked drudge somewhere on the precarious frontier? The trader did not greatly deplore the lack of religious training, for in the remote settlements this was often still an unaccustomed luxury, albeit some thirty years had now gone by since Sir Francis Nicholson, as royal Governor, *although himself described as "a profane, passionate, headstrong man, bred a soldier,"* as if the last fact were an excuse for the former, declared that no colony could flourish without a wider diffusion of the gospel and education, and forthwith ordered spiritual drill, so to speak, in the way of preaching and schooling, contributing largely to the furtherance of these laudable objects, "spending liberally all his salary and perquisites of office"—for which generous trait of character an early and straitlaced historian is obviously of the opinion that General Nicholson should have been suffered to swear in peace and, as it were, in the odor of sanctity.

More than once, when in Charlestown, Varney, notwithstanding his persuasions on the subject, had been minded to inquire concerning the "Queetlees," who he understood from Clo-go-ittah had come originally from Cumberland in England. With his mercantile cronies he had canvassed the question whether the queer, evidently distorted name could have been "Peattie"—for the Cherokees always substituted "Q" for "P," as the latter letter they could not pronounce—and after this transient consideration the matter would drop.

As the child, running about the Indian village with his new-found playmates, grew robust and merry-hearted, and happiness, confidence, and strength brought their embellishing influence to the expression of his dark agate-gray eyes and straightened the nervous droop from his thin little shoulders, the trader noticed casually once or twice how comely the brat had become, and he experienced a

fleeting, half-ridiculing pity for his mother—how the woman would have resented and resisted the persistent shearing and shaving of those silken, loosely twining red curls! Then he thought of her no more. But when the child had come to man's estate, when he was encased in a net-work of muscle like elastic steel wires, when stature and strength had made him alike formidable and splendid, when the development of his temperament illustrated virtues so stanch that they seemed the complement of his physical endowment and a part of his resolute personality, the old trader thought of the boy's father, and thought of him daily—how the sturdy Cumberland yeoman would have rejoiced in so stalwart a son! Thus, with this vague bond of sympathy with a man whom he had never seen, never known, so long ago, so cruelly dead, this intuitive divination of his paternal sentiment, Varney's fatherly attitude grew more definite daily and became accustomed, and he was jealous of the influence of Clo-go-ittah, who in turn was jealous of him.

Now as Varney stood in the dusky trading-house among the kegs and bags and bales of goods, the high peak of the interior of the roof lost in the lofty shadows, he felt that he had been much in default in long-past years, and he experienced a very definite pang of conscience as Otasite swung suddenly around a stack of arms, a new rifle in his hand, the lock and pan of which he had been keenly examining.

He lifted his eyes suddenly with that long-lashed, dreary look of his childhood.

"Did you hear of the Queetlees in Charlestown?" he asked.

"It is *you* who should seek your kindred, Jan Queetlee!" Varney said, impulsively, calling him by his unaccustomed English name. "It is *you* who should go to Charlestown to find the Queetlees!"

Otasite's face showed suddenly the unwonted expression of fear. He recoiled abruptly, and Abram Varney was sensible of a deep depression. It was as he had thought. The wish for restoration to those of his name and his kindred which had animated the boy's earlier years had now dwindled to a mere abstract sentiment of loyalty as of clan-ship, but was devoid of expectation, of intention. All the members of his immediate

family had perished in the massacre, and he had been trained to regard this as of the fortunes of war, cherishing no personal antagonism, as elsewhere among civilized people reconciliations are frequent between the victors and the friends of the slain in battle. Moreover, he was not brought close to it. The participants in the affray were of the distant Ay-rate settlements of the tribe southeast of the mountains and not individualized. The Indians of Tennessee Town, which was then one of the most remote of the Cherokee villages of the Ottawa division, and this perhaps was the reason it was selected as his home, were not concerned in the foray, nor were any others of the Overhill towns. Thus he had grown up without the thirst for vengeance, which showed how little the methods of his Cherokee environment had influenced his heart. And truly the far-away Queetlees, if any such were cognizant of his existence, had troubled themselves nothing about it, and had infinitely less claim on his gratitude and filial affection than Clo-go-ittah. They had left him to be as a waif, a slave. He had been reared as a son, nursed and tended, fed and fostered, bedecked in splendor, armed in costly and formidable wise, given command and station, carefully trained in all that the Indian knew.

"Clo-go-ittah would never consent!" he said at last.

Abram Varney afterward wondered why he should then have had a vision—oh, so futile, so fleeting, so fantastic!—of the twenty, the forty, nay, the sixty years that this man, so munificently endowed by nature, might pass here among the grotesque, uncouth barbarities of the savage Cherokee, while his heritage—his religion, the religion into which he was born of Christian parents, his name and nation, his tongue and station, his opportunity—doubtless some fair, valid, valuable future—all lay there to the eastward but scant five hundred miles away on the Carolina coast. He said as much, and the retort came succinctly, "You live here!"

Otasite's English speech was as simple as a child's, but he thought as diplomatically as Clo-go-ittah himself, whom he esteemed the greatest man in all the world, and he could argue in the strategic Cherokee method. Nevertheless, to give him full sway, that everything possible



might be said in contravention of the proposition, the old trader lapsed into the Indian speech, that was indeed from long usage like a mother-tongue to them both. He staid here, he said, from choice, it was true, but for the sake of the trade that gave him wealth, and with wealth he could return to the colonies at any time, and go whither he would in all the world. But Otasite was restricted; he had no goods for trade, no adequate capital to invest; he could only return to the colonies while young, to work, to make a way, to secure betimes a place appropriate to his riper years. Even this could not be done without great difficulty—witness how many settlers came empty-handed to barely exist in the backwoods and wrest a reluctant living from the wilderness—and it could not be done at all without friends. Now he, Abram Varney, was prepared to stand his friend; Otasite could take a place in the service of the company, in the main depot of the trade at Charlestown. His knowledge of the details of the business, of which Abram Varney's long absences had given him experience; of the needs of the Cherokee nation; of the ever-continued efforts of the French traders, by means of the access to the Overhill towns afforded by the Cherokee and Tennessee rivers, despite the great distance from their settlements on the Mississippi, to insinuate their supplies at lower prices, in the teeth of the Cherokee treaty with the British monopolizing such traffic, and bring down profits—all would have a special and recognized value and be appreciated by his mercantile associates, who would further the young man's advancement. Thence he could at his leisure make inquiries concerning his father's family, and doubtless in the course of time be restored to his kindred.

Otasite listened throughout with the courteous air of deliberation which his Indian training required him to accord to any discourse, without interruption, however unwelcome or trivial it might be esteemed. Then, smiling slowly, he shook his head.

"You cannot be serious," he said. "It would break old Clo-go-ittah's heart, who has been like a father to me."

Abram Varney too had the British bulldog tenacity. "What will you do, then," he asked, slowly and significantly, "when Clo-go-ittah takes up arms against the

government? Will you fight men of your own blood?"

He was re-enforced in this argument by the habit of thought of the Indians—the absolute absence of tribal dissensions, of internecine strife, so marked among the Cherokees: here no man's hand was lifted against his brother.

Jan Queetlee palpably winced. Come what might, he could never fight for the Cherokees against the British—his father's people, his mother's people—no more than he could fight for the British against his adopted tribe—the Cherokee—and he the "Man-killer!"

"They will fight each other," said Varney, weightily, "and the day is not far—the day is not far!"

For in 1753 the cumulative discontents of the tribe were near the crisis, earnestly fostered by the French on the western boundaries, that vast domain then known as Louisiana, toward whose siren voice the Cherokees had ever lent a willing ear. The building by the British government, two or three years later, of those great defensive works, Fort Prince George and Fort Loudon, situated respectively at the eastern and western extremities of the Cherokee territory, mounted with cannon and garrisoned by British forces, served to hold them in check and quieted them for a time, but only for a time. Jan Queetlee, by reason of his close association with the chiefs, knew far more than Varney dreamed of the bitterness roused in the hearts of the Indians by the friction with the government, the aggressions of individual colonists, the infringements of their privileges in the treaty, and in opposition the influence of the ever-seductive suavity of the French.

As with a sudden hurt, Jan Queetlee cried out with a poignant voice against the government and its patent unfaith, striking his clinched fist so heavily on the head of a keg of powder that the stout fibres of the wood burst beneath the passionate blow, and in a moment he was covered with the flying particles of the black dust. Explosive it was, Varney remembered, and lest there should be a candle or a pipe lighted here, he did not wait for the return of one of the brawny packmen to remove it to a cave beneath the trading-house, which he utilized for storage as a cellar, but addressed himself to the job. Jan Queetlee silently assisted, his face darker, more lowering with the

thought in his mind than with the smears of the powder.

Varney remembered this afterward, and that he himself, diverted by the accident from the trend of his argument, had launched out in a tirade against the government as they worked together, the young Briton's energy, industry, and persistence so at variance with the aspect of his tufted topknot of feathers on his auburn curls, and the big blue warrior's marks on his broad white chest. For Varney too had his grievances against the powers that were; but his woes were personal. He vehemently condemned the reconciliation which the government had effected between the Muscogees and the Cherokees, for although there were more deer-skins to be had for export when the Indian hunters were at pacific leisure, Varney had considered the recent war between these tribes an admirable vent for gunpowder and its profitable sale; and since the savages must always be killing, it was manifestly best for all concerned that they should kill each other. He could not sufficiently deride the happy illustration which the Governor had given them (in his fatuity, Varney thought) of the values of peace and concord. In the presence of the two delegations the mediating Governor had taken an arrow and shown them with what ease it could be broken; then how impossible he found it to break a quiverful of arrows, thus demonstrating the strength in union. Varney argued that the Indians would readily perceive a further application of the principle and turn it to account, combining against the colonists. In the same spirit he animadverted upon a monopoly from which he was excluded in common with the traders in general, and which had been granted to a mercantile company seeking to establish posts among the Choctaws, and he freely imputed self-interested motives to the Governor in the matter. The enterprise, although favored by the government, obviously because, undertaken on a scale of phenomenal magnitude, it promised to dislodge the French and their long-established trade among the Choctaws, and bring that powerful tribe to a British allegiance, had finally proved a failure; and with a bitter joy in this fact he alternately condemned and pitied the government, because it could not wrest this valuable opportunity from the iron grasp of the "Mississippi Lou-

isianians." He had, too, a censorious word for the French, commercially—called them "pedlars," celebrated their deceitful wiles, underrated the quality of their cloths, and inconsistently berated them for their low prices, finding a logical parity in all these matters in the errors of their religion, which they had so vainly and so zealously sought to instil into the unreceptive hearts of the unimpressible Choctaw.

With the plethora of interest involved in these subjects, he was distracted from the theme that had earlier occupied his mind. It recurred no more to his thoughts until several days had passed. He chanced to be occupied with his new goods down in his cavern. It was illumined only from above; there was a trap-door in the floor of the trading-house, and thence a pale tempered light drifted down, scarcely convenient, but sufficient for his purposes. Once he noted a sudden shadow flicker across it. He experienced a momentary surprise, for having left no one in the building, and the door being locked, he imagined it could not be forced without noise enough to rouse him. Again the shadow flickered across the trap-door; then ensued a complete eclipse of the scant glimmer of light. There was a step upon the ladder which served as stairway—a man was descending. He felt a sudden constriction about his throat. He realized an impending crisis even before he noted that the door above had been closed, and that the ladder was now removed and laid upon the ground. He had an idea—he could see naught—that the unknown invisible man had seated himself on the ladder on the ground, where he remained motionless, silent, in anger, in grief, or some strange savage whim hardly possible for a civilized creature to divine.

The time that passed in this black nullity—he never could compute it—moments, doubtless, but it seemed hours, tried to the utmost the nerve of the entrapped trader, albeit inured by twenty years' experience to the capricious temper of the Cherokee Indians. He felt he could better endure the suspense could he but see his antagonist, identify him, and thus guess his purpose, and shape his own course from his knowledge of character. With some acquired savage instinct he too remained silent, null, passive; one might have thought him absent. Perhaps

his quiescence, indeed, fostered some doubt of his presence here, for there was a quick rasping sound of flint on steel, the spunk was aglow, and then in the timorous flame of the kindling candle, taken from his own stores above, Varney recognized the face and figure of the stately and imperious old chief Clo-go-ittah. The next moment he remembered something far more pertinent. He called out in an agitated voice to the Indian to beware of the powder with which the place was largely stocked.

"I came for that," said Clo-go-ittah, slowly, and with unaccustomed fingers snuffing the wick as he had seen Varney perform the process, for the Indians used torches and fires of split cane for purposes of illumination.

"For God's sake what have I done?" cried the trader, in an agony of terror, desirous to bring his accusation to the point as early as might be and compass his release, thus forestalling the violent end of an explosion.

"What do the English always?—you have robbed me!" said Clo-go-ittah, the light strong on his fierce indignant features, his garb of fringed buck-skin, his many rich strings of the ivorylike wampum about his neck, his gayly bedecked and feathered head, and in shadowy wise revealing the rough walls of the cave, the boxes and bales of goods, the reserve stock, as it were, the stands of arms, and the kegs and bags of powder.

As Varney, half crouching on the ground, noted the latter in the dusk, he cried out precipitately, "Robbed you of what? My God! let us go up stairs. I'll give it back, whatever it is, twice over, fourfold! Don't swing the candle around that way, Clo-go-ittah! the powder will blow us and the whole trading-house into the Tennessee River."

Clo-go-ittah nodded acquiescence, his stately feathers on his head catching the light in the clare-obscure of the cavern. "That is why I came! Then the British government could demand no satisfaction for the life of the British subject—an accident—the old chief of Tennessee Town killed with him. And I should be avenged."

"For what? My God!" Varney had not before called upon the Lord for twenty years. To hold a diplomatic conversation with an enraged wild Indian, flourishing a lighted candle in a powder-

magazine, is calculated to bring even the most self-sufficient and forgetful sinner to a sense of his dependence and helplessness. The lighted candle was a more subjugating weapon than a drawn sword. He had contemplated springing upon the stanch old warrior, although, despite the difference in age, he was no match for the Indian, in order to seek to extinguish it. He reflected, however, that in the struggle a flaring spark might cause the ignition of scattered particles of the powder about the floor, and thus precipitate the explosion which he shuddered to imagine. "For what? Clo-go-ittah," he asked again, in a soothing, smooth cadence, "for what, my comrade, my benefactor for years, my best-beloved friend—avenged on me for what? Let's go up stairs!"

The flicker of the wavering candle showed a smile of contempt on the face of the angry Indian for a moment, and admonished Varney that in view of the Cherokees' relish of the torture his manifestations of anxiety but prolonged his jeopardy. It brought, too, a fuller realization of the gravity of the situation, in that the Indian should so valiantly risk himself. He evidently intended to take the trader's life, but in such wise that no vengeance for his death should fall upon the Cherokee nation. Abram Varney summoned all his courage, which was not inconsiderable, and had been cultivated by the wild and uncertain conditions of his life. Assured that he could do naught to hasten his release, he awaited the event in a sort of stoical patience, dreading, however, every motion, every sound, the least stir setting his expectant nerves aquiver. Silence, quiescence, brought the disclosure earlier than he had feared.

"When I took the boy Jan Queetlee—why do I call him thus, instead of by the name he has earned for himself, the noble Otasite of Tennessee?"—the old chief began as deliberately, as disregardfully of the surroundings as if they were seated under the boughs of one of the giant oaks on the safe slopes of Chilhowee yonder—"when I took him from the braves who had attacked and overcome the Carolina stationers, I owed him no duty. He was puny, and ill, and white, and despised! You British say the Indian has no pity. A man's son or brother, or father or mother, has claims upon

him. Otasite was naught to me, a mere *eeankke!*" (a captive). "I owed him no duty. My love was voluntary. I gave it a free gift, no duty! And he was little, and drooping, and meagre, and ill all the time! But he grew; soon no such boy in the Cherokee nation, soon hardly such a warrior in all the land—not even Otasite of Watauga, nor yet Otasite of Kiwassee; perhaps at his age Oconostota excelled" (Oconostota always was pre-eminently known as the "Great Warrior"). He paused to shake his head and meditate on difficult comparisons and instances of prowess. After an interval which, long enough, seemed to the trembling trader illimitable, he recommenced abruptly: "Says the Goweno long time ago to me, 'Is not there a white youth among you?' I say, 'He is content; he has no white friends, it seems—no money.' Says the Goweno to me, 'Ah, ah, we must look into this!' and says no more."

Clo-go-ittah flung back his head and laughed so long and so loud that every echo of the sarcastic guttural tones, striking back from the stone walls of the cavern, smote Varney with as definite a shock as a blow.

"And now," the Cherokee resumed, with a changed aspect and a pathetic cadence, "I am an old man, and I lean upon Otasite. My sons are all dead—one in the wars with the Muscogee and two slain by the Chickasaw. And the last he said to me, with his lingering latest breath, loath to go and leave me desolate, 'But you have an adopted son, you have the Otasite.' And now," his voice was firm again, "if I have him not, I go too, and you go. We go together."

"I will not advise him to quit the nation—never again!" cried Varney, suddenly enlightened, fervently repudiating his interference. "Since you disapprove, he shall not return to Carolina. He cannot go without me—my help; he could not find a place—a home. Bold and fine as he is here, he would be strange there; he knows naught of the ways of the colonists. He would be poor, despised, while here he has been like the first, the best. His pride could never stoop to a life like a slave's; his pride would break his heart. Let me undo the mischief I have wrought; let me unsay the unthinking, foolish words I have spoken."

It was perhaps with the faith that the artful trader could best turn the young fellow's mind back to its wonted content, as his crafty arguments had already so potently aroused this wild, new dissatisfaction, that Clo-go-ittah at last consented to liberate him for this essay, not without some cogent reminder that he would hold him responsible for its failure. And indeed in recanting his former urgency, when he sought out Otasite, Varney exerted himself to the utmost.

"You are satisfied here. You know the life. Like me, you love it. If I who can choose prefer it, why not you?"

But Otasite shook his head.

"When I talk to you of the colonies I speak as a man does of a dream. It is something true and something false. I add here and I let slip there to make out the connection, and give the symmetry of truth to the picture. But did I ever tell you how they love money in the colonies, how they cheat, and strive, and slave their lives away to add to their store; how they reverence and worship the wealth of others till it seems that a rich man can do no wrong—if he is rich enough? Did I ever tell you this? The poor, they are despised for being poor, and they are let to suffer. Here poverty is not permitted. If a man lose his dwelling by fire, the town builds him another house. You know this. If a man fail in his winter hunt, the others give of their abundance. Here one is rated by his personal worth. Here the deed is held to be fine, not the mere thing. Here you are valued as the great Otasite, and all men give you honor for your courage. There you are Jan Queetlee, a penniless clod, and all men despise you and pass you by."

But again Otasite shook his head.

It was no spurious flare of ambition, ineffectual, illusory; no discontented yearning for a different, a wider life that the trader's ill-advised words had roused. That sentiment of loyalty to the British government, which had never cared to claim Jan Queetlee as a subject, seemed bred in his bone and born in his blood. Perhaps it was the stuff of which long afterward the Tories were made. He could not lift his hand against this aloof, indifferent fetich. And yet take part against the Cherokees, whom he loved as they loved him! For with his facilities for understanding the

trend of the politics of the day he could no longer blind himself to the approach of the war of the tribe with the British government, which, indeed, came within the decade. The sons of Clo-go-ittah, slain in the cruel wars with other Indians, had been to him like brothers, and in their loss he had felt his full and bitter share of the grief of a common household. Even yet he and Clo-go-ittah were wont to sadly talk of them with that painful elimination of their names, a mark of Indian reverence to the dead, substituting the euphemism "the one who is gone," and linger for hours over the fire at night or on the shady river-bank in sunlit afternoons, rehearsing their deeds and recalling their traits, and repeating their sayings with that blending of affectionate pride and sorrow that is the consolation of bereavement when time has somewhat softened its pangs and made memory so dear. And Clo-go-ittah had been like a father—it seemed to Jan Queetlee as if he had had no other father. He could not leave Clo-go-ittah, old, desolate, and alone. Yet the war was surely coming apace, as they both knew, a war which already tore his heart in sunder, in which he could only evade taking part against his own—his own of both factions—by going at once and going far. He could decide no such weighty matter.

At last he determined he would leave it to fate, to chance, showing how truly a gambler his Indian training had made him. He would stake the crisis on a game at chungke; if he won, he would go to Carolina, and take sides with neither faction; if he lost, he would cast his future part and lot with the Cherokee nation.

Varney, thoroughly uneasy, had come to feel a personal interest involved. If Otasite quitted the country, he felt his life would hardly be safe here, since the craft of Clo-go-ittah had drawn from the unsuspecting young fellow the details of the plan of removal to Charlestown which he had proposed. And yet he himself was averse to any change, unless it was indeed necessary. When put to the test he felt he would rather live in the Cherokee nation than anywhere else in all the world, and he valued his commerce with the tribe and his license from the government, under duly approved bond and security, to conduct that traffic in Tennessee Town and Tellico as naught

else on earth. He discovered so earnest and genuine a desire to repair the damage of his ill-starred suggestion that Clo-go-ittah, showing his age in his haste and his tremulousness and excitement, disclosed to him in a flutter of triumphant glee that he had a spell to work that naught could withstand—a draught from Herbert's Spring to offer to Otasite. Thither some fifty miles he had despatched a runner for a jar of the magic water, and after drinking of it Otasite could not quit for seven years the Cherokee nation even if he would.

It was in the council-house that the mystic beverage was quaffed. There had been guests—head men from Great Tellico and Citico—during the afternoon, received in secret conclave, and now that their deliberations were concluded and they were gone, Otasite, not admitted to the council, being one of those warriors who did the fighting of the battles devised by the "beloved men," strolled into the deserted, domelike place. Its walls, plastered with red clay, were yet more ruddy for a cast of the westering sun. The building was large enough to accommodate several hundred people, and around the walls were cane seats, deftly constructed and artificially whitened, making, according to an old writer, "very genteel settees or couches." Tired with the stress of mental depression and anxiety as physical effort could not tame him, and vaguely prescient of evil, Otasite had flung himself down on one of these, which was spread with dressed panther-skins, his hands clasped under his head, his scalp-lock of two auburn curls dangling over them.

Through the tall narrow doorway the autumnal landscape was visible, blazing with all the fervors of summer; the mountains, however, were more softly blue, the sunlight of a richer glister; the river, now steel, now silver, now amber, reflected the atmosphere as a sensitive soul reflects the moods of those most dear; the forests, splendid with color, showed the lavish predominance of the rich reds characteristic of the Chilhowee woods; a dreamlike haze over all added a vague ideality that made the scene like some fondest memory or a glamorous forecast.

"*Akoo-e-a!* summer yet!" said Clo-go-ittah, his eyes too on the scene, as he sat on a buffalo-rug in the centre of the floor drawing in the last sweet fragrant

breaths from his long-stemmed pipe, curiously wrought of stone, for in the manufacture of these pipes the Cherokees of that day were said to excel all other Indians. The young Briton experienced no mawkish pang to note that it was ornamented at one end by a dangling scalp, the interior of the skin painted red for its preservation, and greatly treasured. He had, in fact, a pipe of his own with a scalp much like it. Indeed, his was a fine specimen, and it had been a feat to take it, for it had once covered a hot Chickasaw head.

"*Akoo-e-a!* the day is warm!" remarked Clo-go-ittah. He lifted his storied pipe, and with its long stem silently motioned to a young Indian woman, indicating a great jar of water. She quickly filled one of those quaint bowls, or cups, of the Cherokee manufacture, and advanced with it to Otasite; but the proffer was in the nature of an interruption to his troubled thoughts, and he irritably waved her away.

"I am displeased with you," said Clo-go-ittah, sternly, lifting his dark, deeply sunken eyes to where the "Man-killer" lay at full length on the cane settee. "You set me aside. You have no thoughts for me—no words. Yet you can talk when you go to the trading-house. You have words and to spare for the trader. You can drink with him. You can sing, 'Drink with me a cup of wine.'" He lifted his raucous old voice in ludicrous travesty of the favorite catch, for sometimes the two Britons, so incongruous in point of age, education, sentiment, and occupation, cemented their bond as compatriots by carousing together in a mild way.

But this ebullition of temper had naught of the ludicrous in Jan Queetlee's estimation. He was pierced to the heart.

"*Aketohta!*" (Father!) he cried, reproachfully. He had sprung to his feet, and stood looking down at the old chief, who would not look at him, but kept his eyes on the landscape without, now and then drawing a long lingering whiff from his pipe. "*Aketohta!* I have no thought for *you!*—who have alone taken thought for me! I have words for the trader and silence for *you!* You say keen things, and you know they are not true! You know that I had rather drink water with you than wine with him. I am not

thirsty; but since it is you who offer it—" His expression changed; he broke into sudden pleasant laughter, and with a rollicking stave of the song, "Drink with me a cup of wine," he caught the bowl from the girl's hand and drained it at a draught.

"*Seohsta-quo!*" (Good!) cried Clo-go-ittah, visibly refreshed, as if his own thirst were vicariously slaked. But Otasite stood blankly staring, the bowl motionless in his hand. "It is good for wine to be old," he said, wonderingly, "but not water."

For his palate was accustomed to the exquisite sparkle and freshness of the mountain fountains, and this had come from far.

The crafty Clo-go-ittah stolidly repressed his delight, save for the glitter in his eyes fixed on the azure and crimson and silver landscape glimmering beyond the dusky portals of the terra-cotta walls. "*Nawohti! nawohti!*" (Rum!) he said, with an affectation of severity. "You drink too much of the trader's strong physic! You have no love now for the sweet, clear water." And he shook his head with the sophisticated reproof of a father of our times as he growled disaffectedly, "*Nawohti! nawohti!*"

Otasite nothing questioned the genuineness of this demonstration, for the Cherokee rulers, in common with those of other tribes, had long waged a vigorous opposition to the importation of strong drink into their country; indeed, as far back as 1704, when holding a solemn conference with Governor Daniel of North Carolina to form a general treaty of friendship, the chiefs of several tribes petitioned the government of the Lords Proprietors for a law, which was afterward enacted (and disregarded), forbidding any white man to sell or give rum to an Indian, and prescribing penalties for its infringement. It was not the first time that Otasite had heard unfavorably of the influences of "*nawohti*," which, by-the-way, with the Cherokees signified physic, as well as spirituous liquor, a synonymous definition which more sophisticated people have sought to apply. He was content that he and the old chief were once more in affectionate accord, and he did not seek to interpret the flash of triumph in Clo-go-ittah's face.

For seven years! for seven years! the

white "Man-killer" could not, if he would, quit the Cherokee country. Well might the old chief's eyes glisten! The youth was like a son to his lonely age, and Otasite's prowess the pride of his life. And like others elsewhere he had softened as age came on, and loved the domestic fireside and the companionship about the hearth, hearing without participating in the hilarious talk of the young, and looking out at the world through the eyes of the new generation, undaunted, expectant, aglow with a spirit that had long ago smouldered in his own; for the fierce Indian at the last was but an old man.

Abram Varney, too, experienced a recurrence of ease. He had unwittingly imbibed much outlandish superstition in his residence among the Cherokees, and indeed other traders and settlers long believed in the enchaining fascination of Herbert's Spring, and drank or refrained as they would stay or go.

Otasite, however, was all unaware of the spell cast upon him when he came into the chungke-yard the next day, arrayed in his finest garb, the white dressed doe-skin glittering in the sun, his necklaces of beads, his belt of wolf fangs, his flying feet in their white moccasins—all catching the light with a differing effect of brilliancy.

Varney watched him as, with the two eagle feathers stiff and erect on his proud head, his two incongruous long auburn curls that did duty as a "war-lock" floating backward in the breeze, he ran so deftly, so swiftly, with so assured and so graceful a gait that the mere observation of such symmetrical motion was a pleasure. The trader had scarcely a pulse of anxiety. Indeed, disingenuously profiting by the tip afforded by Herbert's Spring, he was heavily backing Wyejah as a winner!

A windy day it was; the clouds raced through the sky, and their shadows skimming over the valleys and slopes challenged their speed. The Tennessee River was singing, singing! The mountains were as clearly and definitely blue as the heavens. That revelation of ranges on the far horizon unaccustomed to the view, only vouchsafed by some necromancy of the clarified autumnal air, never before seemed so distinct, so alluring—new lands, new hopes, new life they suggested. Wyejah's scarlet attire, its fringes tas-

selled with the spurs of the wild turkey, rendered his lithe figure strongly marked against these illusory, ethereal tints as he sped abreast with Otasite along the level sandy stretch of the chungke-yard. And how well he played! Varney realized this with a satisfaction as of having already won his wagers, many and large, for Otasite would leave the nation should he be victorious, and having drunk unwittingly of Herbert's Spring, he could not quit the Cherokee country, although he himself was still unaware of having quaffed of those mystic waters. Therefore defeat was obviously his portion. Whenever the trader thought anew of his secret knowledge of this fact he offered odds on Wyejah, and once more gazed at him with satisfaction—at the young warrior's face fiercely, eagerly smiling, his great flattened ears distended on their wire hoops, his dark eyes full of sombre brilliance. How well he played! and how hard the skill of his opponent pressed him! How accurate was the aim of the long lance of Otasite as he poised his weight on the supple tips of his white moccasins and hurled the missile through the air; how strong and firm his grasp that flung so far the great chungke-stone, skimming but not touching the sand; how tirelessly his long sinewy steps sped back and forth in the swift dashes up and down the great spaces of the chungke-yard; how faithfully he was doing his best, regardless of his own preference in the interests that he had adventured on the result! How like a Briton born it was, Abram Varney thought, for he alone knew of Otasite's resolution, and the significance of the game to him, that the boy could thus see fair play between the factions that warred within him for his future. He had staked the future on the event,—and suddenly it was the present!

A wild clamor of excitement, of applause, rose up from the throats of the crowd in the natural amphitheatre, clanging and clattering in long guttural cries,—all intensified by a relish of the unexpected, a joy in a new sensation, for Wyejah had never before been beaten, and Otasite was the victor at chungke.

Abram Varney felt his heart leap into his throat, then sink like lead; Clo-go-ittah, triumphant, knowing naught of the subtler significance of the contest,

joyful, aglow with pride, rose up in his splendid feathered mantle, standing high on the slope, to sign to the boy his pleasure in the victory. The sunlight fell, glittering very white on the young fellow's doe-skin garb, his prickly belt of fangs, his bare chest with the blue warrior's marks, the curls of his auburn scalp-lock tossing in the wind. He had seemed hitherto stoical, unmoved by victory as he would have appeared in defeat; but Varney, eager to get at him, to combat his resolution, knew that he was stunned by the complications presented by this falling out of the event. He visibly faltered as his eye met the triumph and affection expressed in Clo-go-ittah's quivering old face. He could not respond to that gaze. He dropped on one knee suddenly, bending low, affecting to find something amiss with one of his moccasins.

Wyejah too could seem unmoved by victory, but indifference to defeat was more difficult to simulate. He had in the first moment of its realization felt the blood rush to his head; despite his strong nerve his hand trembled; the smile of placidity which it was a point of honor to preserve became a fixed grin. Several other young braves had come into the yard, and were idly tossing the lance at the great chungke-pole—as one of nowadays might pocket the billiard balls with a purposeless cue after a match was played. Wyejah too had carelessly cast his lance aslant; then he idly hurled the chungke-stone with a muscular fling along the spaces of the white sand. His nerve was shaken, his aim amiss, his great strength deflected. The heavy wedge-shaped stone skimmed along through the air above the stretch of sand, and striking the kneeling figure on the temple, the future of the victor at chungke became in one moment the past.

The trader could only have likened the scene that ensued to the moment of an earthquake or some other stupendous revulsion of nature. In the confusion, the wild cries, the swift running back and forth, the surging of crowds of figures into the chungke-yard that obliterated the wide blare of the sun on the white sand, he made good his escape. He knew enough of the trend of Cherokee thought to be prescient of the fate of the scape-goat. Clo-go-ittah in the first burst of grief he knew would blame himself that

he should have tempted fate by the mystic draught from Herbert's Spring to hold here that bright young form for seven years longer. How sadly true!—for seven years Otasite would remain, and seven to that, and, alack, seven more, and forever! Soon, however, the natural impulses of the Indian's temper, intensified by long cultivation, would be reasserted. He would cast about for revenge, remembering the first suggestion of the departure of Otasite, and from whom it had emanated. But for the Carolina trader and his specious wiles, the old chief would argue, would Otasite have thought of forsaking his foster-nation, his adopted father, for the selfish, indifferent British, the "Goweno" at Charlestown, who cared for him nothing? The trader it was who had brought this calamity upon them, who had in effect, by the hand of another, administered the fatal draught. Seek for him!—drive him out!—wreak upon him the just, unappeasable vengeance of the forever bereaved!

The old trader had evinced an instinct in flight and concealment that an animal might envy. No secure hiding-place he selected, such as might be known or divined—a cave, the attic of his trading-house, the cellar beneath—all obvious, all instantly searched. Instead he slipped into a rift in the rocks along the river-bank. Myriads such crevices there were in the tilted strata—unheeded, unremarked, too strait and restricted to suggest the idea of refuge, too infinitely numerous for search. There, unable in the narrow compass to turn, even to shift a numbing muscle of his lean old body, in all the constraint of a standing posture, he was held in the flexure of the rock like some of their fossils, as unsuspected as a ganoid of the days of eld that had once been imprisoned thus in the sediment of seas that had long ebbed hence, or the fern vestiges of a later date finding a witness in the imprint in the stone of the symmetry of its fronds. He listened to the hue-and-cry for him; then to the sudden tramp of hoofs as a pursuing party went out to overtake him, presumably on his way to Charlestown, maintaining a very high rate of speed, for the Cherokees of that date had some "prodigious fine horses."

Straining his senses—all unnaturally alert—he distinguished, as the afternoon wore on, the details of the preparations



for the barbarous sepulture of the young Briton. Now and then the cracking of rifle-shots betokened the shooting of his horses and cattle and all the living things among his possessions—a practice already in its decadence among the Cherokees, and later, influenced by the utilitarian methods of civilization, altogether abandoned. Swift steps here and there through the village intimated errands to gather all his choicest effects to be buried with him, for his future use. To this custom, it is said, and the great security of the fashioning of the sepulchres of the Cherokees, may be attributed the fact that little of their pottery, arms, beads, medals, the more indestructible of their personal possessions, can be found in this region where so lately they were a numerous people; for the effects of the dead, however valued, were never removed or the graves robbed, even by a savage enemy. The Indians rarely permitted the presence of an alien at the ceremonies of the interment of one of the tribe; but Varney in times past had seen and heard enough to realize, without any definite effort of the imagination, how Otasite, arrayed in his most gorgeous apparel, his beautiful English face painted vermilion, would be placed in a sitting posture in front of his house, and there in the sunlit afternoon remain for a space, looking in, as it were, at the open door. Presently sounded the wild lamentations and melancholy cadences of the funeral song; the tones rose successively from a deep bass to a tenor, then to a shrill treble, falling again to a full bass chorus, with the progression of the mystic syllables, "*Yah! Yo-he-wah! Yah! Yo-he-wah!*" (said to signify "*Jehovah.*") This announced that the funeral procession, bearing the body, was going thrice around the house of the dead, where he had lived in familiar happiness these many years, and beneath which he would rest in solemn silence in his deep, deep grave, covered in with heavy timbers and many layers of bark, and the stanch red clay, maintaining a sitting posture, and facing the east, while the domestic life of homely cheer would go on over his unheeding head, as he awaited the distant and universal resurrection of the body, in which the Indian religion inculcated a full and firm faith.

The sun went down, and through all the night sounded the plaints of grief.

Late the moon rose, striking aslant on the melancholy Tennessee River, full of deep shadows and vaguely pathetic pallid glimmers. A wind sprang up for a time, then suddenly sank to silence and stillness. A frost fell with a keen icy chill. Mists gathered, and the day did not break—it seemed as if it might never dawn again; only a pallid visibility came gradually upon clouds that had enshrouded all the world. The earth and the sky were alike indistinguishable; the mountains were as valleys, the valleys as plains. One might scarcely make shift to see a hand before the face. Through this white pall, this cloud of nullity, came ever the dolorous chant, *Yo-he-ta-wah! Yo-he-ta-weh! Yo-he-ta-hah! Yo-he-ta-heh!* as in their grief and poignant bereavement the ignorant and barbarous Indians called upon the God who made them, and He who made them savages doubtless heard them.

Creeping out into the invisibility of the clouded day, Abram Varney had not great fear of detection. The mists that shielded him from view furthered still his flight, for his footsteps were hardly to be distinguished amidst the continual dripping of the moisture from the leaves of the dank autumnal woods. At night he knew the savages would be most on the alert. They would scarcely suspect his flight in the broad day. Moreover, their suspicions of his presence here were lulled; craftily enough he followed after the horsemen who fancied they were pursuing him—they would scarcely look for their quarry hard on their own heels. He experienced no sentiment but one of intense satisfaction when, as invisible as a spirit, he passed his own trading-house, and divined from the sounds within that the Indians were busy in sacking it, albeit a far greater financial loss than we of to-day are apt to imagine. For the Indian trade was a very considerable commerce, as the accounts of those times will show. The English and French governments did not disdain to compete for its monopoly with various nations of Indians, for the sake of gaining control of the savages thereby, in view of supplies furnished by the white traders vending these commodities and resident in the tribes, and its value was even sufficient to cast upon government officials, actually prime magistrates of colonies, the imputation of sordid and interested motives in its manage-

ment, the phrase "family job" being familiar in transactions so archaic, probably often ill-founded and malicious, but as virulent as if true.

Recollections of the items and values of his invoices, afflicting to Varney's commercial spirit, threaded his consciousness only when again safe in Charlestown. He reached that haven at last by the exercise of great good judgment. He realized that another party would presently be sent out when no news of capture came from the earlier pursuers; he divined that the probable direction which the second expedition would take was the Chickasaw path, for, being friendly to the British, that nation would naturally be thought of as a refuge to an Englishman in trouble with the Cherokees; therefore Varney, lest he be overtaken on the way, avoided with a great struggle the temptation, mustered all his courage, and adopting an unprecedented expedient, turned off to the country of the Muscogees. That tribe, always more or less inimical to the colonists, blood-thirsty, cruel, crafty, and but recently involved in a furious war against the Cherokees, were glad to thwart Clo-go-ittah in any cherished scheme of revenge, and received the fugitive kindly. Although but for this fact his temerity in venturing among them would have cost him his life, they ministered to his needs with great hospitality, and forwarded him on his way to Charlestown, sending a strong guard with him as far as Long Cane settlement, a little above Ninety-Six.

Wyejah also made his escape. Appalled by the calamity of the accidental blow, he took sanctuary. In the supreme moment of excitement he flung himself into the Tennessee River, and while eagerly sought by the emissaries of Clo-go-ittah in the woods, he swam to Choté, "beloved town," the city of refuge of the whole Cherokee nation, where the shedder of blood was exempt from vengeance. As years went by, however, either because of the death of Clo-go-ittah, or because time had so far softened the bereavement of the friends of Otasite that they were prevailed upon to accept the "satisfaction," the presents required even from an involuntary homicide, he was evidently freed from the restricted limits of the ever-sacred soil, for we find

him among the delegation of warriors who went to Charlestown in 1759 to confer with Governor Lyttleton on the distracted state of the frontier, and being held as one of the hostages of that unlucky embassy, he perished in the massacre of the Cherokees by the garrison of Fort Prince George, after the treacherous murder of the commandant by the order of the Indian king, Oconostota.

Abram Varney never ventured back among "the Nation," as he called the Cherokees, as if they were the only nation on the earth. Now and again in their frequent councils with the Governor at Charlestown, rendered necessary by their ever-recurrent friction with the British government, he sought out members of the delegation for some news of his old friends, his old haunts. Not one of them would take his hand; not one would hear his voice; they looked beyond him, through him, as if he were the impalpable atmosphere, as if he did not exist.

It was a little thing—the displeasure of such men—mere savages—but it cut him to the heart. So long they had been his friends, his associates, as the chief furniture of the world.

He busied himself with the affairs of his firm at Charlestown, but for a time he was much changed, much cast down, for he had a sense of responsibility, and his conscience was involved, and although he had sought to do good he had only wrought harm, and irreparable harm. He grew old very fast, racked as he was by rheumatism, a continual reminder of the stern experiences of his flight. He had other reminders, but he grew garrulous at a much later date. Years intervened before he was wont to sit in front of the warehouse, with his stick between his knees, his hands clasped on the round knob at its top, his chin on his hands, and cheerily chirp of his days in "the Nation." The softening touch of time brought inevitably its glimmers and its peace; his bleared old eyes, fixed on the water-line of the glittering harbor, beheld with pleasure, instead of the sea, the billowy reaches of that mighty main of mist-crested mountains known as the Great Smoky Range, and through all his talk, and continually through his mind, flitted the bright animated presence of the victor at chungke.